

Earth Day: A History of Protecting Public Health

This year, Earth Day celebrates its 50th anniversary on April 22nd. See below for how Earth Day got started and why it's really all about protecting human health through environmental protection and advocacy.



1800s-1900s

Second Industrial Revolution

More technological advancements improved and reshaped our lives such as with the railroads and electricity. However, such advancements also introduced more toxicants such as synthetic pesticides into the environment.

1970



The first Earth Day was established on April 22nd. Ten percent of America's population participated in some way to advocate for environmental regulations for a healthier, more sustainable world.



1990

Earth Day was celebrated globally. Through its focus on global recycling efforts, Earth Day made way for the 1992 United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.*

2010

The majority of UNTHSC Students voted to establish a new fee to implement more environmental and sustainability improvements on campus.



Now

We continue to host Earth Day events each April. These events give people opportunities to volunteer and participate in eco-friendly and healthy activities while raising awareness of the environmental and human health issues of today.

1700s-1800s



First Industrial Revolution

Inventions led to advancements in manufacturing processes and the use of fossil fuels for power. While great in improving how we live, this is where harmful substances started to enter our air, water, and soil in large quantities.

1962



Silent Spring by Rachel Carson raised public awareness of the harmful effects from unregulated use of pesticides on living organisms including humans.

1970s

Environmental Protection Agency was established along with the passage of the Clean Water and Clean Air Acts. The Endangered Species Act was also passed during this time.



2000s



Earth Day continued to raise awareness around environmental issues with many local and community events all over the world. Attention turned towards awareness and action surrounding climate change while calling for individual, collective, and governmental action.

2013

UNTHSC celebrated our first Earth Day Event on campus with over 600 campus attendees. That year, we hosted both external and internal vendors to raise environmental awareness, and we collected and recycled over 5,000 lbs. of electronic waste.



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*source: earthday.org/history

Want to learn more?

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unthsc.edu/sustainability